An Essay on Calomel

This article, of the materia medica, as possessing, in an eminent degree, the various active properties of the multiplied preparations of the mineral, from which it is obtained, has been chosen as the base of a superstructure, which, it is intended, shall consist of remarks, at least, in some degree, applicable to all its kindred preparations.

It seems now to be decided by the Chemists, that calomel is a muriate of the black oxyde of Mercury, and is not, as formerly supposed, a simple submuriate. It is not my intention to detail the process by which it is obtained, nor its history, but I may add, that this, like every other active article of medicine, met with much opposition to its adoption into general practice. But at this day, such has been the change of popular opinion, that no one article is in more common use, either in domestic or regular practice; and may I not say, to an injurious extent? for in many families, & with many physicians too, such is the degree to which this indiscriminate use of the medicine has obtained, that scarcely a finger can be pained, but calomel must be given. Such want of discrimination & judgement, in its exhibition, is to be lamented, for two important reasons.

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2nd as tending to lessen confidence in the medicine, when properly administered. It is very important, that an article, possessing such active virtues, should maintain its due credit. For confessedly, the Lancet & opium, scarcely excepted, the materia medica does not furnish an article of rival powers. Very justly, has it been styled, the Sampson of the m. medica, by him, the effulgent beams of whose genius, have shed a lustre on the philosophy of medical science, equalled only by the brilliant blaze of a noonday sun. To this distinguished gentleman is due, in no little degree, the credit of extricating it from the chains of empiricism, and establishing correct principles regarding its application to diseases. He, first taught, that ten & ten, or ten & twenty, was not, as it has been sarcastically called, a dose for a horse.

What shall be said of the modus operandi of this medicine? It can scarcely be expected, that, in an essay limited, as this must necessarily be, an intimate investigation of this subject, shall be undertaken. Were the writer equal to the task, as necessarily involving all the laws of vital action, it would become too voluminous. Nevertheless, while he begs, an exemption from the task, he is disposed to offer, a few cursory remarks, on this professedly dark part of medical science. It is well known, that from the very dawn of medical science, in the days of Hippocrates,

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To the present illumined day, numerous hypotheses have been framed, for the solution of this problem. Of these, many have obtained a temporary empire, but have all finally yielded to successors, for the most part, not less gratuitous. It would seem, that the imagination, that inventive faculty of the human mind, so soon as the understanding perceives the absurdity of a prevailing theory, eagerly embraces what first presents a more comely and imposing form. Thus the assent of the judgment, is, not unfrequently, obtained, and prejudices established, before its merits are tried by the tests of truth. Thus fixed, a search for truth is undertaken, not that the mind may be disentangled, and extricated, from the intricate mazes of hypothetical visions, but, to obtain for the visionary favorite, a more imposing mask, be the contortion of truth what it may. Were it not so, why should we hear, such very opposite reports, from experiments, made in every other respect, under similar circumstances? The answer is easy. That which should have been the superstructure, has been placed, where should have been, the basis, and vice versa. Instead of the theories, if they can justly claim the title, being framed upon the solid base of a chain, of well established experimental facts, these have been sought, only as supports to castles framed in the imagination.

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Thus, while we are told, from the experiments of one set, that the introduction of the bland fluids, milk, into the wood vessels, will necessarily cause a train of Dangerous, if not fatal symptoms; from another it is reported, that Emetic Tartar, may be introduced into the same vessels, without any mischievous results; only, causing emetick effects, as if taken into the stomach, but requiring a smaller dose. That is not a little astonishing, these opposite opinions, are advocated by authorities, equally intitled to credit. What then shall we say of such conflicting statements? Charity would teach us to suppose, what has been hinted, that from the influence of preconceived opinions, whether derived from education, or ill directed reflections of the mind itself, a barrier has been formed against the evidence of truth. The vulgar adage," an man convinced against his will, is of the same opinion still; may aptly and with much propriety be applied to minds, thus fettered with prejudices. But, I would not be understood, as intending to detract from the moral good intention of the parties. I suppose, it will not be denied, that the mind, will readily yield credence to the evidence of a fact, it is anxious should exist, while more forcible evidence will not obtain assent to a fact, the mind is disinclined to. Hence, we may fairly learn, that it is unsafe, to yield implicit confidence in the opinions of any man, or set of men, which shall be the

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offspring of a favorite theory, unless, it be further supported by strong corroborating testimony. Genuine scepticism, either in morals or medicine, I am not disposed to encourage; but I would say, that a premature assent to evidence, improperly presented to the mind, may, and will impede the advance to correct notions and principles, and consequently, practice, in each. In many of these products of speculation, are displayed much ingenuity and profundity of intellect, but too much like the enchanting forms, seen in midnight visions, its beauties adorn no solid structure. A fair specimen of this is presented to us, in the elements of medicine. During the reigns of this hypothesis, all was excitement, excitability, sthenics & asthenics Diathesis. But these days have passed away, and have been succeeded by the halcyon days of Sympathy, under whose auspicious empire, I have been favored with an ingress to the temple of medical science. This much famed theory, is entituled in an exceedingly imposing form, and is supported by many of the brightest luminaries, that have illumed the science of medicine, but like its predecessors, its grasp is too expansive. It is made a universal solvent. No force of attraction between particles of difficulties, being sufficient to resist its very active solvent powers. Thus it is said, by sympathy, conception obtains. The embryo expands, the foetus is perfected

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ed, and finally, by sympathy, ushered into light. By sympathy, its nutritient fluids is elaborated, & so on, even to death, in endeavoring which, sympathy is yet active. But before I take leave of sympathy, I must say, that it seems liable to exceptionable, than any that have gone before.

The question yet remains, how are we to account for the elevation of agents on the system? In prosecuting this enquiry, it may be well to consider, first, what is necessary to constitute action. Two things are important; a power possessed of some principle, property, or susceptibility, of acting, and an exciting agent. The organised system may be considered as the power, possessing a certain susceptibility of receiving impressions, which may be called, excitability, irritability, sensorial power, or, if any may prefer the term, vital principle. Thus constituted, it is fitted to exhibit, the phenomena of vital action, when acted on by any agent, the impress of which it is susceptible. No one visible phenomenon of vital action, can exist, independent of exciting agents. From this it may be inferred, that I consider life, a force state. Not entirely, so; I would say, that active, [illegible] life is, but that this peculiar susceptibility, alluded to above, may exist in the organised system, under some circumstances, totally independent of all stimulus, & by their mysterious [illegible], exhibit some properties, apparently differing, from all mechanical or chemical action.

But to relieve more immediately to the subject, much was of late been said of the relative action between the germ and medicines. And by some gentlemen, more particularly, it has been reported, and supposed with much vigour, that as the germs are the active part, it follows as a consequence, that the germs must be the active agent in the cure of disease. The conclusion or report is erroneous, and be [illegible] it without spirit, from an [illegible] of relative action, that the germs, [illegible] the force [illegible] solve. Considering [illegible] reference. The [illegible] that the [illegible] interference of [illegible] the phenomena of [illegible], yet we [illegible] that it is [illegible] absolutely necessary [illegible] for [illegible] the [illegible] cases. If [illegible] look [illegible] energy, [illegible] consists [illegible] the germs, yet we can [illegible] that it is the action of the [illegible] or the other? Would it not, with [illegible] the [illegible] conserved [illegible] and [illegible] the [illegible] chemical [illegible], [illegible] support. [illegible] for [illegible] the [illegible] acid [illegible] bases. [illegible] that [illegible] seed be [illegible] to [illegible] harder [illegible] the seed [illegible] in the earth, [illegible] seem, [illegible] seems [illegible] the weeds in the [illegible] the harder [illegible] the seed, [illegible] the combined [illegible]

It may, then, be [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]. There [illegible] presently in [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] case, in the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] the [illegible], [illegible] the actions of [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] yet they [illegible] [illegible] substance. I [illegible] [illegible] of [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] which we may [illegible] at important [illegible]. Indeed, it cannot be denied, that many of [illegible] and [illegible] [illegible] action, do take place in the [illegible] system [illegible] [illegible] action. Whether medicines enter the circulation, [illegible] that way, produce the cause of action, or only [illegible] on the part, to which it is applied, and extended by sympathy, and nervous influence, I would not pay to determine. It may be that they sometimes act in both ways.

I shall not carry [illegible] to speak of the various remedial properties of calomel, but occasionally advert to them, when considering its application in the management of diseases. One point of its use in Hepatitis. This disease in the commencement, [illegible] [illegible] the acute symptoms of acute inflammation, requires the common depletive remedies, [illegible] [illegible] [illegible], [illegible] this stage of the complaint, [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible] evidence, up to a certain period [illegible] the mineral salts. After a time depletion, much benefit may be derived from a blister over the epigastric part. The specific color of saliva [illegible] the digestive system, seems [illegible] to be so generally admitted, that it would appear, somewhat unnecessary, to add to the already accumulated map of evidence. But, as [illegible] this [illegible] manner, it may not be amiss to subjoin a few remarks [illegible] communication to me under, from Dr. Dudley of Va., when [illegible] of this article, he says: "In our ground the medicine is [illegible] in a particular manner to have, what I think, a [illegible] operation. In some circumstances manifesting, the bowels, in a more [illegible] manner, than in the general, I have [illegible] considerable pain experienced [illegible] the [illegible] effects [illegible] resulted from its powers. [illegible] of the [illegible] generally [illegible] the [illegible] it becomes necessary to make some mechanical impression on the system. This may be done, by administering a few doses of Calomel. If much [illegible] it will be proper to suffer the Calomel to operate on the bowels. In some cases it will be necessary to withdraw it

[illegible] cases, it would be proper to pass to the [illegible] treatment. This would be best, if applied over the region of the liver. It will seldom be necessary, in urgent cases, to resort to such a gentle [illegible] of the remedy, will prove sufficient. After the subsidence of the acute stage, the system may be restored by tonics. This form of treatment is also [illegible] in the chronic form of the disease.

In [illegible], this medicine has been much cried [illegible] for a particular [illegible] of rheumatism. So great was his confidence in it, that he relied almost exclusively on it. It has also been highly praised, in the hands of distinguished practitioners, in the middle and [illegible] of dysentery. I must say, that it has not, at any rate, relieved in each instance the [illegible] both [illegible] of [illegible], or any set of remedies, which I have tried on [illegible]. In the [illegible] stage, [illegible] in [illegible], it may be given to discharge the bowels, but it is in the advanced stage, in which its best effects are evinced. Here it should be given, in divided doses, so as to produce some [illegible], and lasting action on the bowels. Administered in this way, it will be found very beneficial, in removing the lingering remains of disease, and restoring the susceptibility of the system to healthy action.

In [illegible] of the cornea [illegible] are particularly from inflammation consequent to external injuries of that membrane, Dr. Physick has found a course of calomel completely successful, in many cases occasionally it has been necessary to keep the system under its impression for some time. In most cases not, the Doct. has not found it necessary to urge it to a ptyalism.

In [illegible], under some circumstances calomel may be administered with very happy results. [illegible] of this affection [illegible] often approach [illegible] difficult respiration. In [illegible] cases, [illegible] calomel [illegible] ipecacuanha and opium, may be given at [illegible] the [illegible] from [illegible] may be [illegible] had consequences. In the [illegible] of this disease, calomel will be further [illegible] only in the early stage.

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[illegible] essential alteration. In the more severe cases, [illegible] such as are the offspring of [illegible] in the use of [illegible] [illegible], at the same time, [illegible] a [illegible] corresponding [illegible], [illegible] of [illegible], with the addition of a [illegible] [illegible], will be found [illegible], [illegible] calculated. [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible], except [illegible] [illegible] [illegible].

[illegible] of [illegible] [illegible] Hydrocotyle [illegible], which description of [illegible] [illegible]. In the acute stages of [illegible] otherwise [illegible] [illegible]. But, in the advanced stages [illegible] so as to excite the absorbent system. [illegible] [illegible] scrofula, there has been not a little difference in the opinions of medical [illegible]. In the acute stage of the disease it is [illegible] the best [illegible]. [illegible] In the advanced stage [illegible] [illegible] combined with [illegible] or tonics, as indicated, may be prescribed with advantage in [illegible], in ulcerations or [illegible]. Its alterative effects

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alone, is not to be obtained, and this continued, for several weeks, as the case may require.

In obstinate spasmodic or bilious colics, calomel combined with opium, is superior to any remedial agent. I have seen a pill, composed of ten grains of calomel with 3 grs of opium, given every 1 or 2 hours, with the most happy results. This remedy is peculiarly adapted to cases, in which the stomach is irritable. In bilious cases when protracted it may become proper to make some mercurial action on the system.

In Cholera Infantum, calomel as a cathartic, is usually proper. At this day, it seems pretty well settled, that, to obtain a radical cure in this disease, the system should be soon as possible put under the influences of the mercurial action. For this purpose, calomel, in small and repeated doses, should be early resorted to.

In constipation, calomel is prescribed both as a purgative and alterative. Says Dr Hosack, when ordinary means fail, I give calomel in divided doses, till the gums are affected. A very respectable practitioner, Dr Dudley of Va., in a communication to the writer, says, "I have seldom a case to occur, where the patient, laboring under habitual torpor of the whole

alimentary canal, accompanied with extreme constipation and induration of the fæces, would have an immediate sympathetic action, excited throughout the whole extent of that canal, so as sometimes to produce discharges of diarrhœa, and not unfrequently vomit, unaccompanied by fæcal evacuations. In protracted cases of constipation, may not the good effects of calomel, be referred to its action on the liver?

In obstinate cases of dyspepsia, which are generally connected with some internal obstruction, in the liver, bowels, or mesentery, calomel, when prescribed, can alone with good effect. [illegible] in [illegible] cases, in [illegible] in [illegible], as [illegible] nerves, [illegible] generally, proved [illegible] beneficial.

In Dysentery, particularly of southern climates, calomel has long been much esteemed. I have in this disease seen it given, combined; but I think it is not contraindicated, with opium, to counteract its purgative action, when necessary, aided by senna or oil. A powder containing 10 or 15 grs of calomel & 1 or 2 grs of opium, given at bedtime, relieves in very many cases, the pain, tenesmus, and stools are reduced in the morning, by some less alvine evacuations. This disease is generally accompanied, with febrile derangement, and

the bile has ceased to be secreted, discharged from the liver. When the liver is overwhelmed from its venous, or from the peculiar action of the poisons producing it, it will be more readily subdued by a mercurial impression, the only remedy that can be administered.

In cholera morbus, in which there is likewise much derangement of the biliary ducts, calomel is not less important.

In colitis, as [illegible] with vomiting to [illegible] mucous surface, calomel is to be preferred to the other articles of the class.

In most cases of fever, calomel is indispensible and the more so where the symptoms are dependent upon an inflamed state of the liver.

In [illegible] calomel has been much celebrated. In the acute or early stage, it is used only as a cathartic. In the protracted stage, when the disease is generally kept up by the force of habit, or from mechanical obstruction, nothing can be relied on, except a strong mercurial impression. Keeping up an affection of the gums for months or two more generally be sufficient. This may be aided by free blistering.

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climates, calomel is an invaluable article. In fevers, is generally ushered in, with symptoms of much gastric and hepatic derangement. I am disposed to think, that the morbid cause, expends its main force, on the liver. In many cases, the secretion from the liver, seems to be simply, increased in quantity, and again highly vitiated.

This disease, should be first attacked by bloodletting, emetics & cathartics. As a cathartic, calomel seems to be, universally preferred. It may be advantageously combined with Jalap, Salts, &c. The dose should be large, not less than 20 or 30 grs. I have thrown a physician, who was in the habit of prescribing it, in doses of from 5 to 80 grains. His practice was successful, but I can see no need of such gigantic doses. Calomel, more than any purgative with which I am conversant, emulges the biliary ducts, and pours the secretions, from redundant bile. It [illegible] in the system, before [illegible] off [illegible] of further good effects, in altering the action of the [illegible] and [illegible] the force of the disease. With this view, it [illegible] it. [illegible] and [illegible] sufficient to [illegible] the [illegible] in purging, is [illegible] may be [illegible] [illegible] a solution

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of the disease. It may be given, either in the form of Dr Rush's anti-mercurial powders, or alone, alternated with some aperient mixture. It should be so regulated, as to keep up a gentle earthy stool, at this stage of the disorder. But, in a little more advanced, it will become more desirable to obtain some precise effect from the calomel. Exhibited in doses of one or two grains, three times a day, we have often devised much benefit from it, before any mercurial, is otherwise evinced. From this I have been led to suspect that calomel, like Tart. Antim., is possessed, of some peculiar febrifuge virtue, not hitherto fully adverted to. This peculiar action, however, is as remarkable, in cases of simple fever, unconnected with any apparent local affection. I have seen a case, of considerable febrile excitement, in which calomel has been exhibited as a cathartic, when every symptom has completely subsided, before any action was otherwise evinced. I am also informed, by a lady of much discernment, that she had frequently noticed, that when her children have been attacked with fever, a loss of appetite has entirely removed, by a stool, before the purgative effects have been experienced. These effects have been too often observed, to doubt of their being the effect of the medicine. I have only to add, that my attention has been so recently turned to remarks this.

[illegible] of the medicine, to permit me to say more in its favor. I can scarcely doubt, but that, if the subject was investigated with equal ability and candor, the febrifuge powers of calomel, would be found equal, if not surpassing those of the antimonial medicine, so much extolled, by Sir George Fordyce. But in many cases, the force of the disease is such, that it will require more potent impressions, for its subdumation. In such cases, the medicine must be continued, till the gums announce its propagation of the system. If the symptoms do not readily yield, a moderate action should be continued, till they are subdued. This mode, of managing bilious fevers, I think most satisfactory, if it will be generally, prove as successful as bark or arsenic in intermittents. I have seen the practice fairly tested, and in no one instance have I witnessed, or heard of a fatal issue, where the calomel was connected a specific remedy. After the disease has been thus eradicated, a proper tonic course will speedily restore the patient to health.

The well known efficacy of calomel as a cathartic, in yellow fever, will perhaps induce the reader to dwell on the subject here. Whether there is a peculiar and distinct form of morbid action, or only a higher and more aggravated grade of bilious fevers, seems as yet

[illegible] judices. Should it be the latter, mercurial treatment will be [illegible] necessary, as in its minor stage.

Having been recalled in its proper place, it may be [illegible] to remark here that calomel constitutes one of our best anthelmintics. It may be given alone or combined with rhubarb, jalap or gamboge. It is best to give it alone, and permit to remain several days before the [illegible] is purged off.

I need say [illegible] something of the late cholera [illegible] or acute typhus. I have [illegible] little hesitation in [illegible] it as a hydra headed, monster, [illegible] not conscious of [illegible] seen shorn of his insignia of terror, vanquished and prostrated before the throne of medicine. Yes, even this morbid demon, which has borne the sceptre of death spreading consternation and dismay, wherever it has raised its gigantic form may be [illegible] as a lamb to the butcher, and [illegible] as obedient to the empire of medicine, as Sampson, when shorn of his locks of might, to the Philistines, whom his strength had awed.

In looking over the pathological [illegible] on this disease, I have been much disappointed, in finding nothing satisfactory, either as to the peculiar character, or treatment of it. I will [illegible] to make some [illegible] on it, as presented to my observation in different [illegible] of Virginia.

From the character of the disease, as delineated by Dr Ch[illegible] in his lectures, there would seem to be no very marked point of difference between its appearance in Philadelphia, but from the history given by Dr [illegible] of its attack, it seems there to have assumed a widely different character. [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] during the [illegible] 1814 & 15, [illegible] a tour of military duty, at Richmond Va. [illegible] was sudden, not preceded by any premonitory symptoms, either [illegible] of the disease, or [illegible] of the season. It made its appearance first among [illegible] not exposed to the inclement atmosphere, and changes [illegible] It was very peculiarly marked by its severity and suddenness of attack, and not less [illegible] and distress; for [illegible] speedy relief was afforded, often [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] and [illegible], [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] same [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] direction, and [illegible] the former. [illegible] advanced,

[illegible] symptoms of the disease, such as coma, stupor & delirium, subsultus, strangling & finally death ended the rapid career. Much anxiety, despondency and wakefulness attended many cases.

Dissections, after death from this disease shew the most evident marks of disease, in the thoracic and abdominal viscera. In one case, in which the disease seemed mostly located in the brains, Dissection disclosed no marks of disease in that organ, or its membranes. In the few dissections which I have witnessed, there have been obvious marks of active inflammation, such as adhesions, effusions of lymph, formations of abscesses, &c. in the thorax. In the stomach and intestines, there have been, occasionally, traces of inflammation. In the liver, there are still stronger marks of diseased action; such as induration and vitiated secretion. I have seen the gall bladder turgid with a dark viscid substance, scarcely fluid, and exceedingly acrid.

[illegible] I cannot omit to remark the [illegible] relation which seems to subsist, between the action of cold and the cause of the disease. In what this relation consists, it will be difficult even to conjecture: but, of its existence, there can be no doubt. In my case, occurring in the encampment, some unusual exposure to cold, had preceded the attack. The weather

becoming milder diminished the number of attacks, whereas, becoming colder never failed to enlarge the list of sick. Every person must have observed its coming with the winter, and receding as the season advanced.

[illegible] the treatment of this complaint, the first inquiry that presents itself, is, whether this is a disease of increased or diminished action. There are not wanting, advocates for both sides of the question. I find that Dr. Trent, of Richmond Va., has asserted it to be, an affection of much augmented action. And he attempts to support from his success with the active evacuants. How this may be, perhaps I should not say, but I must confess, that I have not before learnt, that this gentleman was more successful than others. From my observations, as to the results of medicines, the contrary would appear. What has misled most practitioners, have been the evident marks of inflammation; having been accustomed to connect this necessarily with increased action. This error has of late been exposed: and it is now taught, by Doctr. Physick, that inflammation is neither necessarily connected, with increased nor diminished, but is specific & altered action. Embracing these views of the subject, to me, the difficulty seems removed. I am very decided in the opinion,

[illegible], [illegible] much dif- ferent from the [illegible] [illegible], [illegible] that exerted by [illegible].

[illegible] the [illegible] from [illegible], [illegible] physician [illegible] exper- ience [illegible] as might [illegible] has seldom [illegible] from which [illegible] the treat- ment [illegible].

In the [illegible] of 1885-6, [illegible] what [illegible] the disease, [illegible] the disease seemed [illegible] reached [illegible]. It was principally in the practice of [illegible], [illegible] interesting [illegible] of Germany, that I was favored with an opportunity of further testing the proper treat-

[illegible] already. It was his practice to manage it with emetics, mild cathartics, Ipishacuanha, calomel, Diaphoretics and stimulants. Called to a patient in the first, second or third day, unless clearly contraindicated, he immediately gave an active emetic, and promoted its operation by warm drinks, & hot baths. If it also moved the bowels, some cathartic was given shortly after emetic effects had ceased. As an emetic, he generally found the emetic tartar and Ipecac., to answer every purpose; tho from the peculiar irritation of the susceptibility of the stomach, a very augmented dose, will frequently be required to obtain a free emesis. Under such circumstances, or if alum, tartar, &c, he has resorted to the use of Ipecacuanha, and, to use his own words, 'has had reason to be entirely satisfied with the result. He goes on to say, that experience has taught him, that mischief is usually, in cases of much torpor of the stomach, occasionally, from the medicine, Emet. tartar, passing over into the intestines, & inducing hypercatharsis. This course being premised, local affections, if any, will next claim attention. These must be treated by free bleeding, as near the affected part, as convenient. I have seen the whole chest encased by a bleeding, with most happy results.

Next calomel is given, in divided doses, to unbind, as speedily as proper

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rule a strong impression on the system. If it, as here is generally an accumulation of foul acrid matter in the intestines, it will be proper, to administer 3, 20 or 30 at a time, upon a quarter or half an hour. Two, three or more stools a day, according to the nature of the discharges and the strength of the patient. The matter discharged is often very acrid, exceedingly fetid and acrid. The calomel may be given in doses of one or two grains, every 2 or 3 days, so long as seems best, and alternated with some cathartic, more or less stimulating. I have generally seen the compound powder, or the infusion of senna answer very handsomely. When necessary, more potent cathartics may be called for requisition, such as the Barbados aloes, jalap, croton oil &c. &c.

Mr Palmer says he has been in the habit of prescribing the calomel in a purgative dose, once in 48 hours. But so far as my experience or observation extends, no form of treatment, with which I have been acquainted, in point of success, has equalled that I have laid down. I am willing to hazard the assertion, that if the disease be attended early at age, this course of treatment will, of practically all cases, in the early stage of the symptoms, be found equally successful with the previous treatment, with the exception of intermittent fever. I have seen in respect a single case, in which the symptoms have required

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[illegible] the [illegible], [illegible] positive action has been pronounced by the mouths of [illegible]. It [illegible] be seen, by those conversant with the disease, that [illegible] I [illegible] [illegible], [illegible] perfect. I have not been [illegible] [illegible], that [illegible] to [illegible] the names of the more prominent [illegible], Bethesda [illegible] or [illegible]. Whether I have succeeded [illegible] this or other, must decide.

Most [illegible] [illegible] of [illegible] the [illegible] [illegible] tion (except [illegible] the practice of the Pennsylvania Hospital, [illegible] [illegible] seasons, [illegible] my [illegible] of [illegible] this disease have been exceedingly limited. [illegible] this institution, I had frequent opportunities of [illegible] complaint, in its most aggravated forms, & the [illegible] agency of the mercurial action, in subduing all its symptoms. The victims of the disease were, for the most part, seamen whose constitutions had been [illegible] by age or rendered fragile by intemperance, exposure & various irregularity consequent to their avocation. The limited [illegible] of my attendance did not permit me to form an estimate of its radical effects. Within a few days past, I have received from Dr Otto, a very satisfactory communication on the subject. His remarks I beg leave to subjoin.

"I have, says he, been much more frequently disappointed the

[illegible] the D[illegible] by the [illegible] end of the disease [illegible] was [illegible] before, since I adopted this practice. [illegible] great [illegible] possible [illegible] safely [illegible] therefore. [illegible] cases. [illegible] former years, but more especially from a desire to ascertain whether this [illegible] remedy might not prove effectual without the patient suffering so long or so much as in former [illegible] the [illegible] result for [illegible] healthy [illegible] is continued [illegible] healthy, [illegible] of the [illegible] it is [illegible] extent. [illegible] relations [illegible] there is not permanent relief obtained, and that in a vast majority of cases, a complete cure is

affected, if the salivation has been continued actively three or four weeks. This disease is very apt to recur on an exposure to the usual exciting causes. Some of the cases which I have related, may seem, as I have supposed, that in my [illegible] have generally been [illegible], that the cases have been relieved. This opinion however is without foundation. After stating the cases which seem to increase the [illegible] of [illegible] the disease, and [illegible] aggravate he goes on to say "cures of [illegible] by the same remedy are made in persons who have never had the [illegible] disease. There is the remarkable difference in the [illegible] of recovery from pains in these two affections & it is difficult to designate their nature. In the [illegible], they recede in proportion to the continuance of the salivation. In Rheumatism the [illegible], [illegible], soon as the mercury has [illegible] the system." After [illegible] something of the [illegible] of the patients, [illegible], in the Hospital [illegible] persons who have been [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] with [illegible] [illegible] remedy, were often relieved to have [illegible] up. It is however not infallible. I have generally used guaiacum in powder, and the [illegible] Dovers powder. The action of the [illegible] [illegible] of [illegible] [illegible] nature of [illegible], and

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other remedies in great quantity, and have continued them a long time; sometimes singly, and at other times variously combined, I have found each of them occasionally to cure. But I think mercury, when carried to the proper extent, more efficacious, than all these medicines together. Altho' I often rely solely on it yet when it is thought prudent [illegible] some [illegible] of the constitution, [illegible] a radical, [illegible] response reaction of [illegible], [illegible] the parts affected. When I employ the other remedies, above mentioned, I am much in the practice of applying them topical, by the application of an epispastic to the paired part, and so [illegible] does it prove, that it rarely [illegible], that I [illegible] through the [illegible] of the hospital, that some one of the patients does not request of me one. My general mode of producing salivation in the [illegible] is, to give a grain each in half an ounce, with half a grain of opium made into a pill, morning and night. Most commonly, in about a week the mouth begins to be affected; the medicine is then continued, until a sufficient effect will be produced. When the mercury is omitted prematurely, there is not as more difficulty, in reproducing the ptyalism, than there

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was in causing it in the first instance. In some cases, it has gradually ceased, altho' my patients have afforded me, they have continued to take the same quantity, that made their mouths sore. Where the stomach and bowels are irritable, I have substituted the blue pill, or used the mercurial ointment."

As to the use of calomel in syphilis, much discordance of opinion yet obtains, and not a little controversy. I shall not attempt to wrest the implements of warfare from the combatants, nor settle the dispute, I am content that they may fight it out. To me, those who treat chancres as a local affection, deferring the exhibition of mercury till constitutional symptoms supervene, act most consonant with reason and experience.

Much has of late been said, of the diseases caused by mercury. That an agent, so pervading in its nature, is capable of producing serious derangement in the living system, can not be denied. I have seen mercury, very liberally used, but have never witnessed any of those dreadful effects, so much vociferated thro' the land. Nor am I inclined to admit, that they are ever, its necessary consequence. That these evils arise, from a want of proper discrimination, and judgement in adapting the medicine, to the

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state of the disease, and constitution of the patient, to me, seems to admit of little doubt. If mercury made Lepers, Scopards or fawns, I must have been a host, where, I have witnessed none.

It cannot be too forcibly impressed on the minds of physicians, or heads of families, to study the nature, and proper application of this remedy ~~and~~ disease. Let them consider, that all medicines are actively poisonous, as they are actively remedial, so intimately are united, the bitter and the sweet, that good and evil would indeed, seem twin sisters. Let this be a spur to avoid the evil and seek the good. Many diseases may have been named, that have been overlooked, but time will not permit more to be said.

Philadelphia March 5th 1819